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ABSTRACT

An analysis of political rhetoric from a perspective suggested by the theories of Richard M. Weaver indicates that during the post-World War I and post-World War II eras, the United States experienced interplays of sociohistorical variables that prevented the nation from rapidly returning to a tension-free experience of peacetime living. Unemployment, inflation, labor unrest, passions for ideological conformity, and fears of Bolshevism as an international menace served as external stimuli representing danger and preventing the nation from returning to "normalcy." The rhetoric of A. Mitchell Palmer and Joseph R. McCarthy established superficial links between the external stimuli. The "spacious" stylistic qualities of each of these men's discourse welded these components into cohesive relationships that, in an oversimplified way, enabled blame to be laid on single causes; for Palmer, the cause was the radical alien, and for McCarthy, it was Communist activity in the Federal government. The rhetoric of both men lost effectiveness as a political tool when there ceased to be external stimuli that represented danger to the United States. (DF)

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RED SCARE RHETORIC:

A WEAVERIAN PERSPECTIVE

Donald R. Martin

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INTRODUCTION

> Fear is caused by whatever seems to have a great power of destroying us or of working injuries that are likely to bring us great pain. Accordingly, the very indications of such things cause fear, since they suggest that the thing is at hand, 'danger' means just this - the proximity of anything we dread.
>
> Aristotle[1]

A susceptibility to fear, as well as its cognitive and behavioral manifestations, has long been characteristic of the American post-war dilemma. After both World Wars I and II, this susceptibility, nurtured by post-war frustrations, culminated in eras referred to by historians Robert K. Murray and Eric F. Goldman as Red Scares.[2] These were periods of exaggerated reactions of fear to the internal threat posed by Communism.

Aristotle's definition of fear contains the phrase, "the proximity of anything we dread." This conceptualization of proximity as essential to fear is similar to Sigmund Freud's conceptualization of what happens to the individual mind in the post-war setting. According to Freud, when the dangers to life that are part of a great war disappear, individuals affected by the war experience a "traumatic neurosis."[3] The actual dangers to life are gone, yet a fear of these dangers remains. From a Freudian standpoint, the fear of these remaining dangers is often represented by symptoms approaching either melancholia or hysteria.[4] The "Post-War Neurosis," is a phenomenon examined by another psychologist, Sandor Ferenczi, who described the post-war psyche as a state of anticipation.[5] Those affected by the dangers of war anticipate more dangers when the war is over. Under these circumstances, Ferenczi contends, people

react, often in an exaggerated fashion, to external stimuli representing imagined dangers.

The over-riding theme relevant in the theories of Freud and Ferenczi seems to be that the fears and anxieties characteristic of post-war social settings are psychological responses that stem from the individual's direct or indirect relationship with the war effort. This theory of fear caused by anticipation of more suffering or by the belief that men are no longer safe, produces a psychological vulnerability that can be manipulated by a person who not only recognizes this vulnerability but possesses certain oratorical skills that can be used for human manipulation. According to Aristotle, such an orator can place an audience in a frame of mind whereby the likelihood of danger or suffering is accepted.[6] He is an orator who can convince his audience that:

> . . . others like them in a like situation have suffered or are suffering, at the hands of people from whom they did not expect it, and things that they did not expect, and at times when they thought themselves safe.[7]

From a classical perspective, this particular type of orator could be considered a demagogue. In this context, the label demagogue does not hold the negative connotations that are common in its twentieth century usage. To the ancient Greeks, a demagogue was simply a leader of the people in the popular assembly.[8] Obviously, a leader of the people in any age could use the oratorical skills described by Aristotle as both a necessary and justifiable means of alerting an audience to an existing or approaching danger. However, if a leader of the people or any politician were to use these skills, not for the public interests, but rather for his own interests, his oratory would fall within the contemporary understanding of what constitutes demagoguery.

Charles W. Lomas, in his article, "The Rhetoric of Demagoguery," gives a concise description of this type of discourse:

> Demagoguery may be described as the process by which skillful speakers and writers seek to influence public opinion by employing the traditional tools of rhetoric with complete indifference to truth. In addition, although demagoguery does not necessarily seek ends contrary to the public interest, its primary motivation is personal gain.[9]

Demagoguery of this sort has long been a part of the American oratorical tradition. It is, according to Richard Luthin, a phenomenon that flourishes during "eras of discontent," when "the general masses are looking for leaders."[10]

Historians of the eras following World Wars I and II tend to agree that these were frustrating times for the American people that seemed to stem from ill conceived national desires for "normalcy." In Red Scare: A Study in National Hysteria, Robert Murray explains the post-World War I frustrations as being a form of popular disappointment at the nation's inability to return to an "old pattern of life" in light of new post war responsibilities.[11] In the Crucial Decade, Eric Goldman explains the post-World War II frustrations as the American inability to deal with domestic and international affairs that seemed to undermine "their most deeply cherished attitudes."[12]

During each of these eras of discontent, the general masses found political leaders who recognized their psychological vulnerabilities and who possessed the oratorical skills needed to manipulate them. As Sandor Ferenczi might have stated it, the oratory of these politicians can be considered a part of the post-war "external stimuli representing dangers to which people responded in an exaggerated fashion."[13]

During the post-World Wars I and II eras, these political leaders furnished the masses an ideological scapegoat upon which the discontented could vent their frustrations. This was the internal threat posed by Communism to the basic ideals that are a part of traditional American thought. During each of these post-war eras, this scapegoat, rather than the changing social, political, and economic conditions, was blamed for the nation's inability to return to "normalcy."[14] During the post-World War I era, the American awareness of the internal threat posed by Communism was enhanced by the oratory of Attorney-General A. Mitchell Palmer.[15] During the post-World War II era, the American awareness of the internal threat posed by Communism was enhanced by the oratory of Wisconsin Senator Joseph R. McCarthy.[16] Both politicians sought ends that were not necessarily contrary to the public interest, but that possessed motivations that were oriented toward personal rather than public needs.[17] And, finally, to return to an Aristotelean point of view, both politicians were capable of placing an audience in a frame of mind whereby the likelihood of danger was accepted through their oratorical representations of the threats posed by Communism.[18] This study will compare and contrast the rhetorical styles of A. Mitchell Palmer and Joseph R. McCarthy to determine whether "Red Scare" politicians of separate but similar eras employ common rhetorical strategies.

Numerous analytical studies describing the rhetorical components of demagoguery were published between the early 1950's and the early 1960's. These studies seem to have one fundamental element in common: each yields a set of rhetorical characteristics which, according to the authors, are commonly employed by speakers of the demagogical mode.

In "The Rhetoric of Demagoguery," for example, Charles W. Lomas carefully examines four major demagogical techniques: 1) the distortion of truth through the twisting of rhetorical methods, 2) the misuse of facts, 3) an over emphasis

upon the use of emotional appeals, and 4) the use of evocative language to hold the attention of the listener.[19]

In a similar fashion, Craig R. Smith, in "Zeal as a Function of Danger," considers: 1) the spreading of rumors, 2) the employment of faulty logical reasoning, 3) the use of exaggeration to create a sense of danger, and 4) the reinforcement of this sense of danger through circular forms of logical support, as the key elements of demagoguery.[20] Variations of these themes can be observed in the works of Barnet Baskerville,[21] Aaron Levenstein,[22] and Reinhard H. Luthin.[23]

In addition to these general analyses of the rhetorical components of demagoguery, there are many individual studies of the rhetoric of Joseph R. McCarthy. Research has failed to locate comparable individual studies of the rhetoric of A. Mitchell Palmer.

The individual studies of the rhetoric of Joseph R. McCarthy are quite similar. Each seems to encompass variations upon what have been historically accepted as the major ingredients of McCarthyism, i.e., the smear techniques, the use of innuendo, distorting the truth, the multiple untruth, and the use of fear.[24] Noticeably lacking in this research, however, are comparisons between the strategies employed by McCarthy and those employed by other "Red Scare" politicians. Also lacking in this research are direct correlations between the rhetorical strategies employed during "Red Scare" periods in American history, and the socio-historical similarities of the "Red Scare" periods. Hence, by comparing and contrasting the rhetorical styles of A. Mitchell Palmer and Joseph R. McCarthy, an attempt will be made to determine whether or not "Red Scare" politicians of separate but similar eras employed common rhetorical strategies.

METHODOLOGY

Richard Weaver's book, The Ethics of Rhetoric forms the basis for the rhetorical analysis in this study. Weaver outlines and describes the rhetorical characteristics of American oratory in the 1850's and 1860's.[25] From his point of view, these characteristics of "Old Rhetoric"[26] constitute a general rhetorical phenomenon he refers to as "Spaciousness."[27] It is the investigator's contention that the Weaverian concept of "Spaciousness" can not only be utilized as a means of analyzing "Old Rhetoric," but can also be used as a critical method in considering the contemporary rhetoric of demagoguery. Through such an application, not only can commonalities of strategy and technique be examined, but one can better understand how the rhetoric of American "Red Scare" demagogues in the post-war eras became a part of the external stimuli representing dangers toward which people could respond in an exaggerated fashion.

Developing the components of "Spaciousness," Weaver reasons 1) that a distance exists between the speech itself and the events the speech is meant fo signify,[28] 2) that the speaker's words and concepts do not have definite correspondences with reality,[29] and 3) that the speaker makes use of uncontested terms, phrases, and ad hoc definitions.[30] In other words, the rhetoric does not allow immediate realizations and references on the part of the listener, it is general in nature and does not provide an honest or concrete reflection of the issues that concern the speaker, and the speaker employs ambiguous if not controversial structural entities in his rhetoric.

Application of these concepts will reveal the means by which Palmer and McCarthy manipulated their political environments, the means by which they presented political issues to the public, and their stylistic similarities. These three characteristics of spaciousness will be applied to an analysis of one

legislative address delivered by each politician.

ANALYSIS

A. Mitchell Palmer and Joseph R. McCarthy each emerged as reinforcers of fear during their respective eras. Each man experienced varying degrees of success prior to an almost total rejection by the American people but each employed rhetorical strategies that would fail. These strategies are encompassed within a rhetorical phenomenon described by Richard Weaver as the "Spaciousness of Old Rhetoric," and will not stand against any test of accountability. They are most successful at times when the listener's vulnerability is intense and his willingness to believe uninhibited.

The analysis that follows will reveal that "Spaciousness" was a general characteristic of both Palmer and McCarthy's rhetoric and that each politician's role as a reinforcer of fear revolved around the spacious quality of their oratory. Neither politician presented his listeners with totally accurate reflections of the problems yielded by the interplay of socio-historical variables characteristic of their respective eras.

Palmer's Rhetoric

On June 1, 1920, Attorney General Palmer addressed the House Rules Committee, responding to a series of charges made against the Department of Justice by Acting-Secretary of Labor Louis F. Post.[31] The Democratic National Convention was rapidly approaching and Palmer needed to reestablish his deteriorating political credibility in order to appear a viable presidential candidate. In this discourse Palmer is preoccupied with not only reestablishing his position on American radicalism, but also with showing the need for his expertise on this subject. Hence,

the central theme of this discourse is the need for continued action on the part of the Department of Justice to prevent the forthcoming revolutionary assertion by America's radical elements. This speech reflects Palmer's tendency to blame the radical alien for America's post-war problems.

Distance Between Speech and Events Signified

Palmer's address before the House Rules Committee contains a relatively simple syllogistic format. Palmer contends that: 1) the work of the Department of Justice is being hindered by critics who are in actuality friends of the anarchists; 2) such interference only allows radical groups to reorganize and intensify the threat of revolution; and 3) such criticisms must be eliminated and laws must be made more restrictive if America is to be saved from revolution. The logic is superficially concise. However, it also represents oversimplified, overgeneralized, and inaccurate attempts to explain the actual causes of American post-war fear and frustration.

Palmer's rhetoric vividly exemplifies what Weaver describes as a tendency to ". . . hold everything up to a moral magnifying glass. Through this unique lense life looms as a rather large affair."[32] The overgeneralized nature of this speech precludes the attention to detail that would yield an accurate reflection of social and political issues.

The central theme of the address is the need for continued action on the part of the Department of Justice to prevent the forthcoming revolutionary assertion by America's radical elements. Through the adaptation and development of the theme, Americanism is associated with all that is good and moral, while the enemies of Americanism represent all that is evil and immoral. Through such sweeping generalizations, a negative reflection is cast upon the alien

challenger of Americanism. As Palmer commented to the House Rules Committee:

> Most of the individuals involved in this movement are aliens or foreign-born citizens. There are some, however, of unquestioned American extraction. Some of the leaders are idealists with distorted minds, many even insane, many are professional agitators who are plainly self-seekers and a large number are potential or actual criminals whose baseness of character leads them to espouse the unrestrained and gross theories and tactics of these organizations.

As Palmer attempts to become specific in defining the problems caused by the radical alien in the discourse, the distance between the speech and the events the speech is meant to signify becomes clear. Palmer does not tell us who the radical alien is, where he is operating, or specifically what he is doing that constitutes a threat to America. Instead of outlining his case against the radical alien by furnishing such significant details as these, Palmer answers the questions of who, where, and how in a spacious manner that distorts the significance of the problem in the discourse.

Consider the position taken by Palmer in this address to the House Rules Committee. Who is the troublesome element in America? After individually commenting on a number of radicals toward whom the Department of Justice directed action, Palmer divides the troublesome element in America into two categories: 1) those who will actually work directly for revolution, and 2) those who will work from behind the scenes. The latter of these categories are referred to as "parlor bolsheviki." He states:

> . . . the "parlor bolsheviki," the Philistines of our social period, who, enveloped in cigarette smoke and airs of superiority, have lost the touch of just proportion in their measurements of the good and bad in modernism and lent themselves to writing and talk and financial contributions - these people seldom take the risk of doing anything toward paddling along the revolutionary flood.

These "parlor bolsheviki" are then thrust into a much larger definition of the troublesome element that is threatening America. Palmer states:

> All these propagandists and helpers of the international revolutionary scheme, the I.W.W., the Communists, the Communist Labor Party, the anarchists, the radical associations of rebellious schools, and unaffiliated Reds, and parlor bolsheviks, fired by the enthusiasms thrown across the seas by flaming Russia and the glowing torch of the third international, began to work hammer and tongs "to beat anvil blows," the revolutionary poets would say, for an actual revolution in the United States.

Where are all of these incendiaries threatening America? Palmer again broadens the location of the problem in a way that distorts its actual significance. According to Palmer, "the social revolutionary conspiracy" is rather far reaching:

> It reaches from Seattle to New York, to England, to Europe and Russia, to Japan and the Orient, to Australia and back again to South America . . . The evil thing exists in

> Caucasus. It is inflaming native racial hatred and religious bigotry all across western Asia from the Caspian to Suez. It is even in China, Korea, Japan, and India.

And what will be the results of this vast revolutionary conspiracy? Palmer comments:

> Out of the very ignorance will come further agitation, occasional outbreaks, and sometimes systematic industrial disturbances of large proportions, all of which will threaten the peace and good order of this country, and serve to obstruct progress and delay settlement of the many serious problems which are social and political as well as moral and economic, and which demand sympathetic consideration and prompt solution . . . it has been the conscious and deliberate plan of the revolutionary conspiracy to labor for the creation of misery and bankruptcy, the field-ground for revolution.

Noticeably lacking in Palmer's charges is any specific correlation between the radical alien and a well defined movement or conspiracy. He fails to relate the troublesome elements, to one another, and fails to discuss specifically how the elements are linked to an international conspiracy, much less to define the conspiracy. He gives only a vivid description of the outcome of this mythical conspiracy. One can sense the distance that exists between the speech itself and the events it is meant to signify.

Despite Palmer's rhetorical inability to establish a concrete and specific case against the radical alien, he continues in this address to suggest measures he considers appropriate in dealing with the radical alien. These measures not

only reflect the Weaverian concept of "Distance," but also significantly reveal the motives of the man behind the oratory.

In this address, Palmer contends that a "vigorous enforcement of the law," against citizens as well as aliens, is essential as a means of preventing a revolution in the United States, and he wants the federal criminal code intensified for greater flexibility in the deportation and prosecution of radicals. Had the threat of revolution been as severe as Palmer contended on this rhetorical occasion, these recommendations would seem hardly adequate preventive measures. His address reveals veiled political motives. Had this recommendation been accepted by Congress, it would have allowed Palmer even more power in his crusade against radicalism and would have once again made him a viable political candidate for presidential nomination in the summer of 1920.

Palmer's spacious reflection of the post-World War I political climate precludes attention to detail that would furnish the listener a realistic portrayal of the seriousness of the political issues facing the nation. Its effect was to reinforce and re-awaken post-war fears and frustrations.[32]

Words and Concepts That Do Not Correspond With Reality

In addition to the distance between the speeches themselves and the events the speeches are meant to signify, many words and concepts do not have definite correspondences with reality. Richard Weaver describes this analytical concept:

> . . . the speaker seems to be speaking in vacuo. His words do not impinge upon a circumambient reality; his concepts seem not to have definite correspondences, but to be general and as it were, mobile. "Spread-eagle" and "high flown" are two modifiers with which people have sought to catch the quality of such speech.[33]

Palmer's descriptions of the problems caused by the radical alien, in this discourse, also yield a rhetorical reflection of this concept. Stylistic examples of "spread eagle" and "high flown" rhetoric abound in the speech before the House Rules Committee. Consider the following: Palmer and the Department of Justice were merely "enforcing the laws," hoping to prevent the onslaught of revolution in America when suddenly Assistant Secretary of Labor Post, with his ". . . perverted sympathy for the criminal anarchists," caused him to slow down his crusade against radicalism. These friends to the anarchists have sought to instill "false impressions" about his work into the minds of the people. Because of these false impressions, Palmer's much needed crusade against radicalism has been hindered, and ". . . anarchists of the worst type have been set at large amongst the people." This has allowed not only the ". . . reorganization of radical groups," but also the ". . . continual innoculation of the poison virus of social sedition . . . to the very heart and soul of all that by our standards is citizenship." Unless this poison virus is terminated, the troublesome elements in America will continue to be ". . . fired by the enthusiasms thrown across the seas by flaming Russia." The results, of course, according to Palmer, will be ". . . an actual revolution in the United States."

The underscored words and concepts exemplify features that do not seem to impinge upon a circumambient reality. None of these underlined terms and concepts has realistic connection with the political issues that surrounded and formed the psychological backdrop for the rhetorical endeavor. If Palmer were believed, his remarks would indicate that all political critics as well as those journalists working for the periodicals and newspapers that had begun criticizing him were perverted or mentally incompetent. Palmer was not a man to accept constructive criticism graciously.

Similar stylistic features are evident in the recommendations he made for the avoidance of revolution. Consider the following suggestion rendered before the House Rules Committee:

> The vigorous enforcement of the law must be continued and the law must be strengthened in order to punish the citizen for the offenses of which for the alien are deportation.

Further, Palmer describes what might occur if this recommendation is not accepted. He declares:

> A man might walk down Pennsylvania Avenue in the city of Washington, with a bomb in his hand intending the publicly threatening to blow up both Houses of Congress while in session and be immune from prosecution under any general federal statute.

Although this was a hypothetical example of what might happen in America, the fact cannot be ignored that it was a scare tactic by implying that the federal government was vulnerable to overthrow. Such examples obviously were ploys to reinforce and reawaken fear strictly for political purposes.

In each of the preceding quoted passages, underscored words and concepts reflect spaciousness through an incongruous relationship with reality; the words and concepts do not impinge upon a circumambient reality. The speech seems to be a flowing collection of generalities. Because of this stylistic feature, it is not only difficult to determine what charges Palmer is making in these speeches, but also difficult to determine how he wishes to remedy these "revolutionary" predicaments he describes.

Uncontested Terms Given Ad Hoc Definitions

In addition to the spacious characteristic of words and concepts not having definite correspondences within reality, Palmer makes use of the uncontested terms given ad hoc definitions. Weaver describes this particular principle of rhetorical spaciousness in the following manner:

> By this (the uncontested term) we mean the term which seems to invite a contest, but which apparently is not so regarded in its own context. Most of these are terms that scandalize the modern reader with their generality, so that he wonders how the speaker ever took the risk of using them.[34]

Weaver theorizes that rhetorical spaciousness consists of many terms of this type. Most of these are given weakly defensible ad hoc definitions. Such terms are used by the speaker, according to Weaver, to ". . . build his case."[35]

In conducting his defense of the actions taken by the Department of Justice before the House Rules Committee, Palmer describes his version of the revolutionary threat facing America while employing uncontested terms given ad hoc definitions. Palmer and the Department of Justice had been conducting a worthy crusade in defense of Americanism when suddenly, ". . . gross misrepresentations and abuse (were) directed against the department from radical circles." The fact that this crusade was hindered allowed ". . . the reorganization of the revolutionary groups." Such a reorganization will allow the continued spread of "evil thoughts" brought to America by "the agents and propagandists of revolution." These agents and propagandists are part of a great conspiracy, and according to Palmer, ". . . it has been the conscious and deliberate plan of the revolutionary to labor for the creation of misery and bankruptcy, the fieldground for revolution."

Ad hoc definitions of this sort are used by Palmer in building his case against the critics and in support for a strong defense in order to avert the impending revolution. These uncontested terms suggest a number of questions that are given only superficial consideration in Palmer's discourse. How can one be certain that all criticisms directed toward the Department of Justice were coming from members of radical circles and not from responsible citizens? How can one be certain that these criticisms have allowed the reorganization of radical groups? What constitutes a radical group, much less the reorganization of radical groups? Who are the agents and propagandists that brought the revolutionary conspiracy to America? Most aspects of Palmer's description of the problem in this discourse invite not only a contest, but are seldom effectively dealt with by Palmer in anything but a spacious rhetorical manner.

On this speaking occasion, Palmer leaves his audience with the impression that prompt action is essential to prevent the impending revolution in America that would see the evil elements of our society triumph over the good. It is understandable, when considering the post-war passions for ideological conformity, the lingering fears characteristic of the post-war era, the frustrations of muted desires for normalcy, etc., that such a spacious and distorted rhetorical portrait of our society would only serve to reinforce fears at a time when our nation needed not reason to fear, but reason to escape from the cognitive and behavioral manifestations of fear.

Palmer's oratory, despite its spacious contextual essence, relays frightening and serious images. His stylistic features transform Palmer's discourse into a part of the external stimuli representing dangers toward which people could react in an exaggerated fashion during this troubled post-war era.

As Palmer gazed rhetorically through the moral magnifying glass, his oratory clearly reflected good versus evil imagery. Palmer and the Department

of Justice, the good moralistic protectors of the commonweal, must be allowed to continue their campaign against the forces of evil or America will become enveloped in a devastating revolution. Using this approach, Palmer furnished the American people not reason to escape from the cognitive and behavioral manifestations of fear, but reason to intensify their fears. A similar pattern can be observed and identified in considering the rhetoric of another Red Scare politician - Joseph R. McCarthy.

McCarthy's Rhetoric

On December 6, 1950, McCarthy, whose claims of Communism in the high offices of the federal government had placed him in a position of political prominence, addressed the United States Senate where he offered a general critique of American foreign policy.[36] This discourse contains a central theme implying that America is being betrayed by the makers of its foreign policy.

This rhetorical endeavor demonstrates Joseph McCarthy's tendency to point toward Communist activity within the federal government as the cause of the difficulties facing the nation during the post-World War II era. An investigation of this address yields stylistic features that reflect Weaver's conception of spaciousness. It will also become evident that McCarthy, by employing such rhetorical strategies, was presenting distorted reflections of the socio-historical variables characteristic of the post-World War II era.

Distance Between Speech and Events Signified

A syllogistic format similar to that revealed in A. Mitchell Palmer's address is also a part of McCarthy's rhetorical approach. He reasoned 1) that American foreign policy is not following a course that would confront Soviet

expansionism in an intensive manner; 2) by restructuring this policy, the United States would more strenuously confront Soviet expansionism; 3) by following his recommendation, Americans could prove that they are stronger than those who are betraying them into adhering to the inappropriate courses of action in foreign affairs. This format yields an oversimplified and overgeneralized explanation of the international difficulties that were causing tensions in the United States during the post-World War II era. Again we find superficially concise logic furnishing oversimplified, overgeneralized, and inaccurate reflections of what was causing post-war fear and frustration.

The rhetoric of Joseph R. McCarthy, like that of A. Mitchell Palmer, vividly exemplifies a tendency to gaze rhetorically through the "moral magnifying glass" described by Weaver. This is evident in the imagery yielded through the development of the central theme in this discourse.

In his address to the Senate, McCarthy claims that there are men in positions of leadership as well as a mysterious cabal that compose the evil antithesis of Americanism. The diplomats as well as the mysterious cabal are all proponents of atheistic communism and advocate an approach to foreign policy that is causing the mothers and wives of the young men fighting overseas to tread ". . . deeply into the valley of darkness."

As McCarthy attempts to be more specific in outlining the problems caused by the communist traitors, a distance between the speech and the events the speech is meant to signify becomes evident. McCarthy, like Palmer, does not adequately tell us who the traitors are, where they are operating, or specifically what they are doing that is rendering the United States impotent in meeting the Soviet ideological challenge. McCarthy, like Palmer, answers each of these questions in a spacious manner that distorts the actual significance of the problem.

In his problematical description of the appropriate and inappropriate aspects of American foreign policy, the distance between the speech and what he is describing is obvious. Who is causing the problem in the formulation of American foreign policy? Where specifically are these betrayers of America operating? What specifically are they doing that constitutes the betrayal of America?

McCarthy answers the first question by commenting, ". . . the same men who betrayed America are still leading America." Where specifically are these betrayers operating? All that can be inferred from the Address is that these traitors are not only employed by the State Department, but are also men who occupy perhaps other leadership positions in the United States government. What specifically are they doing that constitutes the betrayal of America? The answer to this question, perhaps more than the others, reflects the distance between the rhetoric and the events they were intended to signify. After McCarthy describes three courses of action that had been taken by the State Department and condemns Acheson for his position on China, he contends that these traitors in American government have created a "blueprint of disaster" that must be rejected or ". . . western civilization will have been dealt a staggering blow."

The element of "distance" can also be depicted in the recommendations made by McCarthy for dealing with Communism. In this speech before the Senate, McCarthy's recommendations for coping with the "blueprint of disaster" still lack the necessary detail that would indicate anything but a vague handling of the subject. McCarthy indicated that General MacArthur should be able to ". . . hit the Chinese Communists whereever, whenever, and however he chooses." McCarthy wanted to see the Marshall Plan ". . . completely changed so as to conform to the Forrestal Plan." The Senator wanted the United States government to give support to the armies of Chiang Kai Shek. None of these recommendations

outlined by McCarthy is ever directly related to the problem he describes. Apparently, McCarthy wanted his listeners to know that he favored a hardline approach toward Soviet expansionism, but he neither related how these recommendations could avert the "blueprint of disaster" nor how they could possibly be effective with the vast number of "international criminals" in positions of trust. The solution offered in the message does not tell how these criminals could be dealt with. The vague quality of these suggestions as well as McCarthy's failure to detail recommendations to deal with the existence of a conspiracy in the State Department suggests that the Senator was more interested in creating fear than in presenting fact.

Words and Concepts That Do Not Correspond With Reality

In addition to the distance between the speech and the events that it is meant to signify, McCarthy's rhetoric also contains many words and concepts that do not impinge upon a circumambient reality. McCarthy, perhaps even more frequently than Palmer, employs words and concepts that seem to be stylistically "spread eagle" and "high flown."

In McCarthy's address to the Senate, his descriptions of the appropriate as opposed to the inappropriate courses of action taken by the State Department are also vivid reflections of this stylistic entity, for each seems to lack a definite correspondence with political actuality. Each description distills the entire essence of the courses of action and weighs their value on the basis of how effectively they are as individual means of curtailing Communistic expansionism.

McCarthy contends that because of the futile nature of the United States military involvement in Korea, ". . . mothers and wives . . . are treading

deeply into the valley of darkness and despair." McCarthy believes that it is time for a ". . . realistic examination . . . of the situation to produce some lessening of the perils of those gallant men now fighting on the frontiers of freedom." This examination would allow the development of an effective course of action. In this examination, the Forrestal Plan is described as, ". . . giving military aid to all the people who themselves were willing to fight Communism." The Marshall Plan was designed to ". . . build up the area (Western Europe) economically and keep it defenseless from a military standpoint." The Hiss-Acheson-Jessup-Lattimore-Vincent Plan was designed to ". . . turn all of Asia over to the Communists and then cooperate with the friendly Communists." According to McCarthy, these second and third courses of action were designed to perpetuate communistic expansionism and are given the support of the ". . . men who betrayed America (and who) . . . are still leading America." These are the foreign policies devised by the "international criminals" in the State Department while ". . . the rim of the world is on fire."

The underscored words and phrases in McCarthy's description of the Korean conflict as well as in his descriptions of the inappropriate courses of action taken by the State Department seem to relay the impression of a politician speaking in vacuo. McCarthy does not specifically outline the positive aspects of the Marshall Plan or the extreme difficulties that faced the State Department in developing a realistic China policy. The stylistic qualities of these descriptions relay the impression that both the Marshall Plan and the administration's China policy were adopted for the lone purpose of assisting the Soviet Union in their quest for ideological and actual expansionism. It is not only difficult to determine what McCarthy considers to be the nature of the Communist menace, but also difficult to determine how he wishes to remedy this internal threat to American security.

Uncontested Terms Given Ad Hoc Definitions

In addition to the spacious characteristic of words and concepts not having definite correspondences within reality, McCarthy's rhetoric, like Palmer's, contains many uncontested terms that are given ad hoc definitions. In building his case against the traitors in the State Department, McCarthy frequently makes use of this type of definition while in the process of making damaging charges. Many of the terms used by McCarthy not only seem to invite a contest, but also seem to be excessively general. These ad hoc definitions seem to be specifically geared toward casting a negative shadow over the activities of the State Department.

The Korean War is defined by McCarthy as a battle on "the frontiers of freedom." The loss of this battle would constitute from McCarthy's point of view, ". . . a devastating blow to western civilization." And according to McCarthy, the occurrence of such a blow is a virtual certainty because of the faulty courses of action adopted by the State Department. For the purpose of this discourse, McCarthy defines American foreign policy as, "the blueprint for disaster." The makers of American foreign policy are subsequently defined as, "the international criminals," and ". . . the perfumed dilettante diplomats." These men are responsible for developing an approach to foreign affairs that has allowed the United States to become victimized by the spread of international atheistic communism. Because of the ad hoc definitions, many aspects of McCarthy's description of the problem facing America once again seem to invite a contest. Who are the international criminals? What specifically is a blueprint for disaster?

Every aspect of McCarthy's rhetoric seems to relay serious and frightening images comparable to those rendered by the rhetoric of A. Mitchell Palmer.

This is particularly true when considering that McCarthy was a United States Senator with the status of that position containing the inherent credibility that could enhance the frightening images contained in his oratory.

The distance between the speech and the events the speech is meant to signify; the words and concepts that never seem to impinge on a circumambient reality; the uncontested terms given ad hoc definitions, all elements of a spacious rhetoric (in a Weaverian sense), produces a rhetoric that becomes a part of the external stimuli representing dangers toward which people could react in an exaggerated fashion.

DISCUSSION

During the post-World War I and post-World War II eras, the United States experienced interplays of socio-historical variables that prevented the nation from rapidly returning to a tension-free experience of peace time living. During each of these periods politicians emerged who took advantage of these tensions and served to reinforce our nation's fears, as well as rhetorically provide additional stimuli toward which Americans could react in an exaggerated fashion.

After World War I, the United States was troubled by unemployment, inflation, labor unrest, passions for ideological conformity, and fears of Bolshevism as an international menace (i.e., external stimuli representing danger). The interplay of these variables caused more fear and frustration because of the nation's inability to return to the illusive state of normalcy that it so desired.

During this period of fear and frustration, Attorney-General A. Mitchell Palmer, through spacious rhetorical representations of the problems facing the nation, served to reinforce the nation's fears.

After World War II, the United States was troubled by the eerie haze left by the atomic bomb, international tensions with the Soviet Union, labor unrest, inflation, as well as evidence of treason at home (i.e. external stimuli representing danger). Such conditions for a second time denied Americans the untroubled peace they had desired.

During this era of fear and frustration, Senator Joseph R. McCarthy, through spacious rhetorical representations of the problems facing the nation, served to reinforce the nation's fears.

The rhetoric of A. Mitchell Palmer and Joseph R. McCarthy established superficial linkages between the external stimuli or components of fear. The spacious stylistic qualities of each man's discourse welded these components into cohesive relationships. By doing so, both Palmer and McCarthy, in an oversimplified way, were able to blame all of America's problems on single causes. In Palmer's case, the cause was the radical alien. In McCarthy's case, the cause was Communist activity in the federal government. Had their oratory carefully examined the causes of America's fear and frustration, it would have become evident that blame could not be directed toward any one element.

The rhetorically superficial linkage of the external stimuli that were troubling America to the existence of a radical menace is created stylistically through rhetoric that constitutes spaciousness, a stylistic quality that never rises above a superficial examination of an issue. The creation of such rhetorical linkages is possible especially during eras of discontent where there are new and frightening international and domestic developments that trouble a citizenry. This provides a fertile atmosphere in which a demagogue can operate successfully through the employment of spacious stylistic qualities.

The rhetoric of both Palmer and McCarthy lost effectiveness as a political tool when there ceased to be external stimuli that represented danger to

the American people. It seems safe to hypothesize, however, that should the socio-historical conditions associated with the two post-war periods considered in this paper appear again, America will be ripe for accepting the spacious rhetoric of another demagogue.

ENDNOTES

[1]Lane Cooper, The Rhetoric of Aristotle (New York: Appleton - Century - Crofts, Inc., 1960), p. 118.

[2]Robert K. Murray, Red Scare (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1955), p. 4; Eric F. Goldman, The Crucial Decade (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1956), pp. 19-34.

[3]Sigmund Freud, Beyond the Pleasure Principle (London: The International Psycho-Analytical Press, 1922), p. 8.

[4]Freud, p. 8.

[5]Sandor Ferenczi, Theory and Technique of Psycho-Analysis (New York: Basic Books, Inc., 1960), p. 139.

[6]Cooper, pp. 110-111.

[7]Cooper, p. 110.

[8]Charles W. Lomas, "The Rhetoric of Demagoguery," Western Speech, XXV (Summer, 1961), 161.

[9]Lomas, p. 161.

[10]Richard H. Luthin, "Some Demagogues in American History," The American Historical Review, LVII (October, 1951), 3-4.

[11]Murray, p. 17.

[12]Goldman, p. 5.

[13]Ferenczi, p. 139.

[14]Murray, p. 16; Goldman, p. 5.

[15]Stanley Coben, A. Mitchell Palmer: Politician (New York: Columbia University Press, 1963), pp. 209-210.

[16]Richard H. Rovere, Senator Joe McCarthy (New York: Harcourt, Brace and Co., 1959), pp. 18-19.

[17]Coben, p. 198; Goldman, pp. 120-122.

[18]Cooper, pp. 110-111.

[19]Lomas, pp. 160-166.

[20]Craig R. Smith, "Zeal as a Function of Danger," Today's Speech, XVI (February, 1968), 29-30.

[21]Barnet Baskerville, "The Illusion of Proof," Western Speech, XXV (Fall, 1961), 236-237.

[22]Aaron Levenstein, "The Demagogue and the Intellectual," The Antioch Review, XIII (September, 1953), pp. 259-274.

[23]Luthin, pp. 22-46.

[24]"McCarthy: A Documented Record," The Progressive, XVIII (April, 1954), 51-58; Nathan Glazer, "The Method of Senator McCarthy," Commentary, XV (March, 1953), 244-256; Michael Straight, "The Fanaticism of Joseph R. McCarthy," The New Republic, CXXX (June 28, 1954), 6-9; For individual analyses of McCarthy's major addresses see: James Edward Sayer, "The Rhetoric of Distortion of Joseph R. McCarthy," (unpublished Master's thesis, University of Arizona), 1969; James Albert Schnaible, "Joe McCarthy: Demagogue for a Decade," (unpublished Master's thesis, Colorado State University), 1969.

[25]Richard M. Weaver, The Ethics of Rhetoric (Chicago: Henry Regnery Company, 1953), pp. 164-185.

[26]Weaver, p. 164.

[27]Weaver, p. 164.

[28]Weaver, p. 164.

[29]Weaver, p. 165.

[30]Weaver, p. 166.

[31]U. S., Congress, House, Committee on Rules, Charges Against the Department of Justice, Hearings, 66th Cong., 2nd Sess., June 1, 1920 (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1920), pp. 6-29. (All quotations from this speech are taken from this source.)

[32]Weaver, p. 165.

[33]Weaver, p. 165.

[34]Weaver, p. 166.

[35]Weaver, p. 166.

[36]Joseph R. McCarthy, Major Speeches and Debates Delivered in the United States Senate, 1950-1951 (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1953), pp. 157-160. (All quotations from this speech are taken from this source.)